



# NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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## **NOAA Awards Green Grant to Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary**

*Solar panels to be installed atop Learning Center*

Solar panels will be installed atop the Sanctuary Learning Center building at NOAA's Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary's Maui office. The project is funded through a NOAA program "Green Grant" and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

The \$107,700 project, led by the Maui office's facility coordinator LTJG Benjamin LaCour, will feature a 16 kW expandable photovoltaic system on the roof of the newest building on the Kihei campus. In addition, an interactive computer kiosk will provide visitors with an educational tool that will explain alternative energy technologies, the benefits of green practices, the systems energy production information, as well as the total amount of green house gases and money saved.

The State of Hawaii has one of the highest energy rates in the country. On Maui, over 90 percent of power supplied comes directly from burning oil. HIHWNMS will work with the Maui Energy Company (MECO) to install a net metering system where MECO will buy back the electricity not used by HIHWNMS. Because the site receives some of the highest solar irradiation in the country, it is expected that the savings on power costs to the site will equal the grant in eight years.

"This exciting project is a win-win for the government, the County of Maui, MECO and the public," LaCour said. "Over time, the photovoltaic system will be a huge cost savings to HIHWNMS, and the educational component may encourage others to adopt alternative energy solutions, reducing the county's reliance on imported oil."

The solar panels project marks another step in the ongoing renovation of the Maui site. The project is slated for completion by the end of the year. Future plans for greening the site include the repair of the original photovoltaic system that was on the roof of the administration building, and was the first ever installed on Maui in 2001.

For more information about HIHWNMS visit [www.hawaiianhumpbackwhale.noaa.gov](http://www.hawaiianhumpbackwhale.noaa.gov).

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaa>.

On the Web:  
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: [noaa.sanctuaries.gov](http://noaa.sanctuaries.gov)

High resolution jpg available for photo below. Please email [nancy.daschbach@noaa.gov](mailto:nancy.daschbach@noaa.gov) for copy.



HIHWNMS Learning Center. Solar panels will grace the rooftop providing the Kihei campus “free” electricity from the sun.